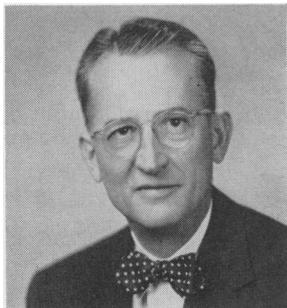


50 years — of Food and Drug Protection



By **GEORGE P. LARRICK**
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This section of *Public Health Reports* is devoted to an account of some of the principal programs of the Food and Drug Administration which affect public health.

It is an appropriate way to commemorate the golden anniversary of our first Federal pure food and drug law, not so much by reviewing the past as by considering the challenge of the future.

The articles are by men directly concerned with the administration of the programs. It is notable that they consistently emphasize technological changes in foods, drugs, and cosmetics, affecting an important part of the human environment.

From the beginning the food and drug law has been directed at specific abuses: errors of omission or commission which can be proved in a court of law. Likewise, the law has from its beginning reflected the standard of achievement attained by the majority of producers of foods and drugs and has required the backward element to meet that same standard.

As a result, food and drug law enforcement has been a stimulus to industrial progress as well as a direct and practical means for dealing with important environmental health hazards.

The original Pure Food and Drugs Act which Theodore Roosevelt signed into law on June 30, 1906, was one of the great milestones of public health progress. Few, if any, events have had a greater effect in promoting such objectives as the sanitary handling of food or rational therapeutics in medicine. It would be fitting to dedicate these papers to Dr. Harvey W. Wiley, who, more than any other, was responsible for the enactment of this law.

Each generation needs to learn anew the why and wherefore of its institutions and blessings; otherwise they are taken for granted. Today, the right of the public to pure foods, effective drugs, safe cosmetics, and truthful labels has become generally accepted. It was not always so. We need to be reminded of Dr. Wiley and his 23-year struggle to obtain our first Federal pure food and drug law. It helps us understand and appreciate the value of the protective laws we now have, and the truly wonderful progress made by our food, drug, and cosmetic industries in this half century. It also helps us understand our problems of today and our obligation to insure that food and drug products of today and tomorrow will continue to be the best in the world.